RAJYA SABHA

Tuesday, the 11th March, 1997/20th Phalguna, 1918 (Saka)

The House met at eleven of the clock, **The Vice-Chairman (Shri Ajit P.K. Jogi)** *in the Chair.*

RE. DEMAND TO CLARIFY THE FATE OF THE BILL REGARDING RESERVATION FOR WOMEN

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN (Tamil Nadu): Sir, we want to know the fate of the Bill regarding reservation for women. We would like to know whether the Government is going to pass this Bill in this Session. *(Interruptions).*

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI AJIT P. K. JOGI): Question No. 221. *(Interruptions).*

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA (Karnataka): What has happened to the Bill? Sir, the Business Advisory Committee is not meeting this week. *(Interruptions).* We want to know whether the Government is going to pass this Bill in this Session. *(Interruptions).*

SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA (Madhya Pradesh): We want to know the fate of the Bill. *(Interruptions).*

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (Shri Ajit P. K. Jogi): You have made your point. *(Interruptions).* Please raise it at 12 o'clock. *(Interruptions).*

. **प्रो॰ विजय कुमार मल्होत्रा** (दिल्ली): मंत्री जी यह बताएं कि वे कब तक बिल लेकर आएंगे। ....(**व्यवधान**)....

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI AJIT P. K. JOGI): Please go back to your seats. *(Interruptions).* Mrs. Alva, will you Please go back to your seat? *(Interruptions).* You can raise it at 12 O'clock. *(Interruptions).*

SHRI SATISH AGARWAL (Rajasthan): Sir, kindly direct the Government.... *(Interruptions).*

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI AJIT P. K. JOGI): I will allow you at 12 O'clock. please go back to your seats. *(Interruptions).* Go back to your seats. *(Interruptions).* We will see how he reacts then. *(Interruptions).*

उपसभाध्यक्ष (श्री अजीत जोगी): एक घंटा और रुकिए।

Wait for one more hour. *(Interruptions).* Let us go ahead with Question Hour. *(Interruptions).* Question No. 221 *(Interruptions).* Please don't disturb Question Hour.

SHRI SATISH AGARWAL: Sir, we whole heartedly support the cause of women in this country. *(Interruptions).*

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI AJIT P. K. JOGI): The Minister is responding *(Interruptions).* Now the Minister is responding. *(Interruptions).* Will you go back to your seats? *(Interruptions).* The Minister is responding. *(Interruptions).* Please go back to your seats. The Minister is responding. *(Interruptions).* The Minister is on his legs. *(Interruptions).* He is on his legs. Please go back to your seats. *(Interruptions).* Mr. Minister, please wait till they go back to their seats. *(Interruptions).* Let him respond, please.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (DR. U. VENKATESWARLU): Sir, it is a known fact that this Government is very serious about bringing this Bill in this session. The hon. Prime Minister has already assured this House to this effect. Now I don't think the lady Members should get agitated about it .,..*(Interruptions)*....

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: For the last six months he has been assuring us... *(Interruptions)*....

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI AJIT P. K. JOGI): Please let him speak.

DR. U. VENKATESWARLU: Our hon. Prime Minister has promised that he will bring it in this session.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Liberalised Gold Import Policy for NRIs

*221. SHRI SOLIPETA[†] RAMACHANDRA REDDY:
DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state

(a) the liberalised gold import policy for NRIs and under baggage rules for those travelling abroad; and

(b) how the exporters will be helped in importing gold for their business?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) As per the liberalised gold import policy introduced since March, 1992, as amended, Non-Resident Indians who have stayed abroad for not less than 6 months are eligible to import gold up to 10 kgs. per person on payment of duty in foreign exchange @220/- per 10 gms.

(b) To help exporters for importing gold for their business, Government has provided a number of export promotion schemes whereunder gold is permitted to be imported free of duty for subsequent manufacture of jewellary and re-export. For this purpose, exporters have been given the choice of importing gold, free of duty, either by themselves or to obtain such gold through designated agencies.

SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY: In an effort to curb gold smuggling, the Government liberalised the Gold Import Policy. NRIs can now bring 10 kgs of gold. I want to know from the hon. Minister, why there are different rules for the import of gold (i) for those who have stayed abroad for more than six months; (ii) for those travelling abroad; (iii) for those engaged in gold jewellery trade. What are the reasons for such different rules when the purpose is to curb smuggling of gold? Part 'b' of my question is: During 1990—95, our share in global gold demand averaged 402 tonnes, that is, 16.4 per cent which includes illegal imports into India. This should be viewed against our share of 0.6 per cent in world trade. On the other hand, India exported about 23 tonnes in 1995 accounting for a negligible share in the world trade. I want to know from the hon. Minister what further steps are being taken to boost the export of gold jewellery.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: These rules are different because they are related to different categories of people who bring in gold. For NRIs who have stayed abroad for not less than six months, we have recently liberalised the quantity from five kilograms to ten kilograms per person. Those who have lived abroad for over one year, are allowed to bring gold under the baggage rules. A male passenger is allowed to bring jewellery up to Rs. 10,000 and a female passenger is allowed to bring jewellery up to Rs. 20,000. Exporters fall in an entirely different category. Exporters import gold for the purpose of business. Therefore, there is no restriction, except that they have to undertake an obligation to manufacture jewellery and re-export it. I do not think we can have uniform rules for all the categories because different objectives are sought to be served. The gold jewellery business is growing in India. It is not a question of mere import of gold. It is not a question of design. It is a question of our ability to deliver. It is a question of our ability to meet the requirements of market. We have allowed import of gold by genuine exporters. We have export promotion schemes where gold is permitted to be imported free of duty. We also have a number of units in the export processing zones where a large number of incentives are given to gold jewellery manufacturers in terms of

[†]The Question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Solipeta Ramachandra Reddy.